

## Preparing Globally Competent Teacher Candidates Through Cross-Cultural Experiential Learning

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### Abstract

This manuscript presents findings and implications from a case study of one global educator's attempt to develop globally competent teacher candidates in an elective teacher preparation course. Global Citizenship Education served as the framing paradigm for the course and human experiences of immigrants and refugees served as the milieu for teacher candidates to learn critical inquiry. Teacher candidates also participated in several cross-cultural experiential learning opportunities designed to facilitate the development of global competencies (Longview, 2008) in teacher candidates. Students' reflective journals were analyzed to determine the personal significance of different learning experiences and the extent to which teacher candidates' perceptions of immigrants and refugees changed as a result of the course content and activities. The findings demonstrate the potential of critical inquiry and cross-cultural experiential learning as transformative teaching practices to develop globally competent teachers.

**Keywords:** *Global citizenship, teacher candidates, case study.*

### Introduction

Young people live in epochal times; a period when more people are displaced than at any time in world history, a time when one's mobile device connects to others around the globe and brings events to the palm of our hands. Connections allow young people to bear witness to the crisis of this generation: historic human migration (refugees and immigrants) and the impact on host societies' social, economic, and political arenas (i.e. labor market, social and health services, the education system, housing policy). Increasingly, we see images of refugees' death and suffering, citizenship crises that strip people of human rights and dignity or detain people for indefinite periods of time. The growing population of people without citizenship status draws attention to the number of people living in countries without political rights and unveils the challenges to democracy and lack of democratic development in migration societies.

Our world is becoming increasingly interconnected which presents new challenges for teacher educators. The global scale of human migration and other issues such as social inequality, environmental and ecological degradation, war and violence, health and

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poverty, trade and technology, human rights and social justice also manifest in local settings. These global issues and crises emerge as different problems across societies. They complicate notions of nation-state boundaries and the application of legal frameworks within and across borders; they place tremendous stress on global relations and international regulatory and security regimes. As we take these and other global challenges into consideration, it prompts the question: How should teacher educators prepare teacher candidates (TCs) with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to address complicated and challenging global issues with students?

As educators, we must open new ways of conceiving civic education and global education to promote global understanding and empower young people to engage to resolve local/global issues with social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental dimensions. The role of educators is imperative if we are to move beyond a limited notion of education for the development of knowledge. Educators must work to expand opportunities for young people to build global competencies that include skills and dispositions that facilitate local/global inquiry and cooperation, promote critical reflection, and inspire action for social transformation.

We need globally competent teachers who are able to facilitate the development of young people to become informed, engaged, and globally competent citizens. According to the Longview Foundation (2008), globally competent teachers possess the following attributes:

- Knowledge of the international dimension of their subject matter and a range of global issues
- Pedagogical skills to teacher their students to analyze primary sources from around the world, appreciate multiple points of view and recognize stereotyping
- A commitment to assisting students to become responsible citizens both of the world and of their own communities (p. 7).

There is no prescriptive path for teacher education programs that aspire to achieve these outcomes with TCs. Therefore, teacher educators must identify and address the current challenges in efforts to prepare globally competent teachers by: enacting promising global education practices and developing Global Citizenship Education (GCE) courses and curriculum.

Teacher educators face many challenges in the preparation of globally competent teachers. Scholars, for example, argue that opportunities for teacher training and professional development have not kept up with the demands and needs of a global society (O'Connor & Zeichner, 2011; Osler & Vincent, 2002). In fact, internationalizing efforts in teacher education has “often been a conversation on the fringes of teacher education or historically associated with specific subject matter such as social studies” (Shaklee & Baily, 2012, p. 11). Other challenges for teacher educators begin before students are accepted into teacher licensure programs. In the U.S., for example, global education <sup>2</sup>receives little attention in the K-12 school curriculum (Rapoport, 2009); this results in students having limited global knowledge and few global experiences.

Given the present set of challenges for teacher educators, researchers and scholars have identified several practices to help overcome training and experience issues. The gold standard for teacher education programs continues to be international immersion experiences like study abroad or international student teaching (Merryfield & Kasai, 2010; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008. When international experiences are not an option, other practices for teacher educators to consider include: creating stand-alone global education courses (Parkhouse, et. al. 2015; Ukpokodu, 2010); infusing global content in courses and teach multiple perspectives and worldviews (Carano, 2013; Poole & Russell, 2015); engaging teacher candidates in cross-cultural dialogue (Braskamp & Engberg, 2011; Crose, 2011); and teaching global issues through critical inquiry (O'Connor & Zeichner, 2011). Another promising practice, cross-cultural experiential learning, involves providing TCs with opportunities to learn with and from people of cultures different from their own (Merryfield, 2000; Ukpokodu, 2010).

The global issues and crises of our time also require TCs to not simply learn about people in other parts of the world, but be active participants in a global civil society. GCE is one framework that merits consideration among teacher educators. There are, however, tensions from competing ideologies of GCE: one driven by economic aims (i.e. to prepare knowledge workers in a global economy) and one for social justice (i.e. to prepare students

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<sup>2</sup> In this study, global education is a term used internationally to designate the academic field concerned with teaching and learning about global issues, events and perspectives (Hicks, 2003).

to be active participants in a global civil society and work toward a more peaceful world) (DiCicco, 2016). From a social justice perspective,

GCE moves beyond an exclusively national perspective of world affairs and seeks to avoid a social-studies approach that tends to tokenize and exoticize foreign places and people. As an ideal, the concept of global citizenship education encourages students to adopt a critical understanding of globalization, to reflect on how they and their nations are implicated in local and global problems, and to engage in intercultural perspectives (Pashby, 2012, p. 9).

In practice, GCE for social justice requires students to explore global relations of power and privilege, legacies of exploitation and violence, and take action to interrupt injustices (Andreotti, 2006; Pashby, 2012; Rizvi, 2009). However, because GCE is politically and ideologically contested, teacher educators may need additional incentives and training to teach courses with GCE-related ideas (Rapoport, 2015).

Drawing from a case study (Yin, 2009) of one global educator's attempt to develop globally competent teachers, this manuscript offers insights into TCs' development of global competencies and perceptual changes resulting from cross-cultural experiential learning in a GCE-designed course. TCs were enrolled in an elective education course entitled *Issues in Global Education* during the spring 2016 semester at a rural university in the United States. This case illustrates the potential of cross-cultural experiential learning in the development of globally competent teachers and offers several implications for global educators to consider.

## **Literature Review**

### **The Current Need: More Globally Competent Teachers**

In an increasingly diverse and globally connected world, we need teachers who possess global competencies, "a body of knowledge about world regions, cultures, and global issues, and the skills and dispositions to engage responsibly and effectively in a global environment" (Longview Foundation, 2008, p. 7). Toward the goal of developing global competencies in students, colleges and universities and engaged in efforts to internationalize or globalize in some way, but this work has not been as widely undertaken in teacher education as in higher education more generally. In fact, education programs are often among the least internationalized on U.S. campuses (Longview Foundation, 2008).

While there are various approaches and efforts to internationalize teacher education in the U.S., prominent approaches involve: infusing global content in existing courses, creating new global courses, and offering global experiences (Quezada & Corderio, 2016). Despite these efforts, in the U.S. pre-service teachers <sup>3</sup>face several barriers to receive global education and global experiences in their teacher preparation courses. For one, coursework for pre-service teachers in global education is limited (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2009). Often the content and opportunities for TCs are oriented toward local rather than global contexts (Zhao, 2010) or global content is infused in courses that focus on culture and diversity (Parkhouse, et al, 2015) and not specifically on global education. Second, teacher education programs expect that lessons gained from these limited courses will transfer to and help form TCs' global perspectives (Ukpokodu, 2010). Ultimately, more opportunities are needed for TCs to develop global knowledge, skills, and dispositions associated with global competencies (Longview, 2008).

To address the obstacles listed above and develop global competencies in teacher candidates, teacher licensure programs need to incentivize development of separate global education courses and offer more global opportunities and experiences for training teacher educators (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2009; Parkhouse, et. al. 2015; Ukpokodu, 2010). Currently, if teacher education programs have a global education effort it is a patchwork of disparate emphases infused in courses by faculty rather than a coordinated approach as recommended by research (Ferguson-Patrick, Macqueen, & Reynolds, 2014; Robbins, Francis, & Elliott, 2003). Efforts to prepare globally competent teachers are often insufficient; this challenge is compounded by the fact TCs enter teacher licensure programs with little global knowledge and few global experiences.

### **Challenges to Globally Competent Teachers Begins With the K-12 Curriculum**

Teacher educators must also consider the prior experiences of TCs in K-12 classrooms both as former students and when working with practicing teachers during field placements and internships. In K-12 settings, social studies courses are the traditional home for global education. Today's TCs in undergraduate teacher training programs in the U.S.

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<sup>3</sup> In American teacher preparation programs, the terms 'pre-service teachers' and 'teacher candidates' can be used interchangeably to describe university students who are in a period of guided mentorship, supervised teaching, and university-based coursework prior to licensure.

are products of a post 9-11 environment where the role of social studies in schools changed as a result of ideological pressures and shifts in curricular and pedagogical emphases. As a discipline, the social studies have a long and contentious history consisting of ideological battles over the purpose, content, and methods (Evans, 2004); one such battle is over global education.

On one side are those who think social studies should promote American history, heritage, and democratic ideals above all else. Course content should cover Western social, political, and historical foundations, and emphasize American exceptionalism and the contributions of individuals from the dominant culture (Agresto et. al, 2003; Leming, Ellington, & Porter, 2003). On the other side are global education scholars who argue the social studies are responsible for the development of global citizens (Banks, 2007; Merryfield, 1997; Parker, 2004). These scholars argue for teaching global interconnectedness and interdependence, to explore shared values, ideals and goals to which all citizens are committed, and investigate critical issues of the day and critique issues of power relations through diverse voices and multiple perspectives.

It is also important to acknowledge that most TCs' K-12 social studies experiences occurred during an era of legislation that emphasized high stakes testing. In social studies, high stakes testing is associated with narrowing curricula to include only content tested on the examination (Grant et al. 2002; Vogler, 2006). Narrowing of curricula often results in the exclusion of diverse content, voices, and perspectives (Apple, 2014; Apple & Buras, 2006; Au 2009; Kumashiro, 2015). Pedagogically, high stakes testing increases social studies teacher dependency on teacher-centered practices and emphasis on the textbook as curriculum (Ross, 2000; Segall, 2006; van Hover & Heinecke, 2005).

Against the backdrop of the two competing visions of social studies and the curricular challenges from high stakes testing, research on global education in the U.S. highlights additional issues and concerns. To begin, due to lack of teacher training in global education, teachers are often not comfortable teaching courses that cover world issues and global content (Rapoport, 2010). This affects classroom instruction as American students have little knowledge about the world and global issues (Merryfield, 1998) and lack cross-cultural awareness and perspective consciousness (Merryfield & Subedi, 2003). Scholars posit the lack of global knowledge, perspectives, and awareness is related to the fact that

global education receives little attention in American K-12 school curriculum, in social studies state standards, and that few teachers engage in global education (Rapoport, 2009, 2010). When global education is taught, curricula, teaching practices, and teacher perceptions reinforce American exceptionalism and the “us/them” binary of American citizens and the rest of the world (Gaudelli, 2003; Hong & Halvorsen, 2010; Merryfield & Subedi, 2003) and may unintentionally increase misunderstanding and perpetuate stereotypes (Crocco, 2010; Merryfield & Wilson, 2005; Ukpokodu, 2010). To further illustrate the issues in the research presented thus far, Myers (2006) conducted a study of global education efforts in the United States and offered a sobering critique. He found teachers in U.S. high schools excluded global human rights issues, affirmed national sovereignty, and were unaware of scholarship and efforts related to global education. Myers (2006) concluded the United States “has not overcome the political and cultural stigma of globalism as anti-American” (p. 389).

### **Practices to Develop Globally Competent Teachers**

In the past several decades, researchers in the United States advanced a coordinated approach to global education in teacher training and facilitate the development of globally competent teachers. Coordinated approaches involve the following practices: 1) cross-cultural experiences such as international student teaching and study abroad (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Merryfield & Kasai, 2010; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008); 2) cross-cultural experiential learning opportunities that model global perspectives and allow to students to practice with multiple perspectives and worldviews (Merryfield & Kasai, 2010; Ukpokodu, 2010), local opportunities for intercultural dialogue in educational settings (Braskamp & Engberg, 2011; Crose, 2011), and authentic learning and inquiry-based practices (O'Connor & Zeichner, 2011); and 3) courses that teach diverse content such as information about countries and regions outside the United States and Western world and include multiple perspectives and worldviews of the world's people (Carano, 2013; Merryfield & Subedi, 2003; Poole & Russell, 2015) and incorporate pedagogy of comparisons through cross-case analysis of global issues (Boix Mansilla & Chua, 2016). In combination, international travel, cross-cultural experiential learning, and courses with diverse global content are imperative in the development of globally competent teachers. For teacher educators, it is essential to create opportunities for TCs to meet and talk with

people from different cultures. These experiences enable TCs to develop cross-cultural awareness and perspectives, build cross-cultural relationships, and practice cross-cultural communication skills.

Given the set of challenges to develop globally competent teachers addressed in the research, the *Issues in Global Education* course incorporated several pedagogical practices recommended by research: cross-cultural experiential learning, intercultural dialogue, authentic learning and critical inquiry. Through these practices the *Issues* course sought to effectively prepare TCs with the requisite knowledge, skills, and dispositions, to globally competent teachers. Perhaps most importantly, Global Citizenship Education (GCE) framed the course content, student experiences, and teaching practices.

### **Conceptual Framework: Global Citizenship Education**

Over the past several decades, various scholars traced global educational movements and argued for different emphases, aims, and perspectives (Davies, 2006; Gaudelli & Hielman, 2009; Hanvey, 1976; Heilman, 2006, 2007; Hicks, 2003; Kirkwood-Tucker, 2002; Merryfield, 1997; Osler & Vincent, 2002; Pike & Selby, 1988; Standish, 2012, 2014; Tye, 2003, 2009). Global citizenship, for example, has been part of educators thinking for many years but is relatively new issue in education (Su, Bullivant, & Holt, 2013). Many argue that in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, education for global citizenship is essential to make education relevant and engage young people in actions to address global issues (Gaudelli & Wylie, 2012; Gaudelli, 2016; Heilman, 2009; Ibrahim, 2005;).

Global Citizenship Education (GCE) is a “framing paradigm which encapsulates how education can develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes learners need for securing a world which is more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable” (UNESCO, 2014, p. 9). The content of GCE centers on principles such as non-violence, human rights, cultural diversity, democracy, and tolerance. Osler and Vincent (2002) maintain, GCE is “fundamentally about power –it is a space within which the young global citizen can learn not only about the massive global inequalities between rich and poor nations, but also about the ways in which globalization as a cultural and economic force aggravates local inequalities” (p. 51). Thus, GCE tends to be issues-centered (i.e.,

environmental degradation, cultural identity, war, migrant labor) with focus on issues in local-global contrasts.

Pedagogically, GCE teacher educators facilitate development of global competencies through critical inquiry by encouraging TCs to investigate and question common judgment, and explore the past from historical-critical positions. Through critical inquiry TCs learn to distinguish between reliable and biased information sources; to know and reflect on one's point of view and interests; and to form an opinion and make judgments based on new information. When investigating local-global issues, TCs learn to read and interpret information, to collect, analyze and present data. They critically analyze information to recognize and critique power structures and realize there are multiple perspectives. As a political pedagogy, GCE encourages TCs to identify and reflect upon their own standpoint, to listen to others and defend personal beliefs and opinions respectfully and argumentatively. As TCs develop global competencies, they are encouraged to put what they learn into action. Perhaps most significantly, GCE promotes commitment to social justice and citizen action (Andreotti, 2006; DiCicco, 2016; Pashby, 2012; Rizvi, 2009) and can enable TCs "to learn about their rights and responsibilities and equip them with skills for democratic participation, at all levels, from local to global" (Ibrahim, 2005, pp. 178-179).

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Design***

Creswell (2005) posited qualitative research is used to study problems of which little is known and require a detailed understanding of a central phenomenon. This research employs qualitative methods using data from a case study (Yin, 2009) to describe and explain a phenomenon of interest: To what extent cross-cultural experiential learning opportunities facilitate perspective change and foster the development of globally competent teachers in a teacher education program. Specific to this research, the following research questions guided the inquiry:

1. What significant learning experiences contributed to global learning and development of global competencies?
2. As a result of course content and activities, to what extent did teacher candidates' perceptions of immigrants and refugees change?

### ***Participants***

Study participants included 23 undergraduate TCs enrolled in *Issues in Global Education* at a medium-sized rural university in the Appalachians. Participants represented different undergraduate teacher training programs including: secondary social studies (n=6), early childhood (n=5), English/language arts (n=4), secondary science (n=3), pre-early childhood (n=3), special education (n=1), and secondary math (n=1).

### ***Confidentiality***

IRB approval for this study was obtained and all 23 TCs provided written consent. To avoid coercion, written consent was collected from teacher candidates on the final day of the course by a colleague and not shared with the author until after grades were due. In the findings section of this manuscript efforts were made to preserve anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. Specifically, “TC” was used instead of pseudonyms along with gender-neutral pronouns.

### ***The Issues in Global Education Course***

The author collaborated with globally competent educators from various programs and departments (i.e. Global Studies, African Studies, the Center for International Studies, Counseling and Higher Education, Linguistics, and Global Health) to select readings and develop cross-cultural experiential learning opportunities for the *Issues* course. Using GCE as a framing paradigm, human experiences of immigrants and refugees served as the milieu for TCs to learn critical inquiry and problem-based approaches. TCs examined the complexities of global problems, their interdependence, and the effects on human experiences through a critical country study inquiry that explored push/pull factors of migration in several understudied regions of the world: Latin America, regions of Africa, the Middle East, and regions of Asia. Special attention was given to case studies focused on unaccompanied minors from Central America and the ongoing refugee crisis in Syria to model practices of critical inquiry and global perspectives. TCs were then called to take actions and apply their new understanding of issues to human migration. They designed educational materials to dispel myths about immigrants and refugees, which were used at an international medical conference on immigrant and refugee health. The critical country studies were opportunities for TCs to engage in authentic learning and inquiry (O'Connor

& Zeichner), and pedagogy of comparisons through cross-case analysis of human migration (Boix Mansilla & Chua, 2016).

The *Issues* course also provided multiple instances for TCs to participate in cross-cultural experiential learning opportunities to learn about global issues and implications for teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students in schools. TCs were provided local opportunities for intercultural dialogue (Braskamp & Engberg, 2011; Crose, 2011) and practice with multiple perspectives through cross-cultural dialogue (Merryfield & Kasai, 2010; Ukpokodu, 2010). During three consecutive weeks, TCs were involved in three cross-cultural experiential learning opportunities which involved: a) one 90-minute intercultural communication training; b) one 3-hour cross-cultural dialogue session with international students from Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia to discuss lived experiences and perspectives on issues related to human migration; and c) one 2-hour workshop on best practices for working with culturally and linguistically diverse students followed by an hour-long discussion with international students from the Middle East and Asia enrolled in an intensive English program.

### **Procedures**

TCs enrolled in the course completed five reflective journals during the semester over the following topics: 1) initial reflections on global knowledge and experience, 2) immigration critical country study, 3) refugee critical country study, 4) cross-cultural experiential learning workshops, and 5) summative reflection on the course. For each reflection, students responded to a series of open-ended questions (see Appendix A). To encourage TCs to respond with rich descriptions of their experiences with course content and cross-cultural experiential learning, all journals required 1000-1500 words. A timeline of the writing and analysis process is provided in Appendix B.

### **Analysis**

The analysis of data adhered to phases of thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, I became familiar with the data through immersion and repeated reading and generating an initial list of ideas about the data. For the second step I generated initial codes using a semantic approach (Patton, 1990) and worked systematically through the entire data set giving full and equal attention to each written response. Third, I searched for themes by sorting different codes into potential themes, gathering data relevant to the

themes, and considering the relationship across themes. Fourth, I reviewed themes and examples within codes and across the entire data set. In the fifth step I defined and named themes by generating clear descriptive language for each theme and prepared this manuscript (see Appendix C for example).

### ***Trustworthiness***

In this section I provide evidence for how I addressed what Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe as four types of trustworthiness in qualitative research. In order to establish *credibility* I engaged in ongoing reflexive dialogue and memo writing, analyzed sufficient data from over 400 pages of reflective journals, coded and re-coded data with two-week intervals between sessions (Krefting, 1991), and incorporated direct written quotes from participants in this manuscript. To establish *transferability* I engaged with the literature during analysis on an ongoing basis to enhance the relevance of findings (Tuckett, 2005); as such, findings may inform future practices and desired outcomes of global teacher education. To establish *dependability* I offer transparency of research methods and procedures (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Holloway & Todres, 2003), and explain the procedures adopted for thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Finally, to establish *confirmability* I participated in peer debriefing with global education experts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and employed a semantic approach (Patton, 1990) with these data, which allowed me to analyze themes aligned with previous research.

### **Findings**

The following section is organized by examining TCs' experiences in high school social studies classes and their personal reflections regarding their knowledge and experience with global issues and cultures prior to entering class. From TCs' prior global knowledge and experience as a baseline, I provide TCs' assessment of significant learning experiences that contributed to student learning and the development of dispositional global competencies. Finally, I present themes from the data as evidence of changes in perception about immigrants and refugees.

#### **Fragmented Facts and Parochial Perceptions: The Disconnect of American Students and the Global Community**

With few exceptions TCs' described their high school social studies experiences as focused on US history with very little world history, global issues, or global current events.

Consistent with previous research (Gaudelli, 2003; Hong & Halvorsen, 2010; Merryfield & Subedi, 2003) courses were typically taught from American perspectives; TCs described binaries that reinforced the perspective: “us vs. them,” “allies and enemies,” and “winners and losers of war.” Classes where TCs learned about global current events or controversial issues involving human migration were “reserved for a privileged few” (i.e. AP/college track) and limited to a specific time period (i.e. after the AP exams in late April/early May). For most TCs, any study of countries outside the United States was limited to key events (i.e., immigrants coming to the U.S. through Ellis Island, the Holocaust, or genocide in Rwanda) or by teachers covering a “country’s geography, population, religion, and language and other information that was too general or abstract to have any impact or meaning.” In sum, as one TC described, “The extent of ‘What’s happening in the world?’ we never looked into immigrant or refugee statuses associated with different current events.”

Upon reflection TCs’ conceded having very little knowledge or awareness about immigrant or refugee experiences or the magnitude of conditions that force the displacement of people. The lack of coverage and opportunity afforded in high school social studies led to a knowledge gap where TCs’ knew little information, did not recognize global issues as complex, or see issues associated with human migration as important. As one TC described, “I didn’t know much about immigration or refugees and never took time to learn much about it. I think the main reason I didn’t take the time to learn more about immigration is because I was naïve and didn’t think it affected me in anyway.”

TCs knowledge gap also demonstrated a lack of exposure and experience with global issues and people from around the world. Their global knowledge and experience void was filled by the media and parents as the main sources of information. TCs recalled, “hearing about certain events” (e.g., Donald Trump’s Mexico wall plan) or “seeing things online” (e.g., the 2015 image of the 2 year old washed ashore in Turkey), but never felt empowered to learn more about these or other examples. To illustrate, a TC offered:

I knew some things about immigration, but nothing concrete. I knew a limited amount about immigration from what I heard in the news, articles online, or things my parents told me. I heard people like Donald Trump talking about building a wall

along the Mexico border, but never really looked into the actual policies or stories of real people.

The disparate information that TCs consumed passively and uncritically from different sources led many to have misunderstanding from incomplete or inaccurate information. For example, TCs offered some of the following examples of misinformation: “all refugees from the Middle East end up in America,” “all refugees are in Iraq and Syria,” “immigrants to the U.S. only come from Mexico,” and “most immigrant and refugee issues are confined to the Middle East and Mexico.” The high school social studies opportunities coupled with TCs lack of global knowledge and experience demonstrate where students were at the beginning of the course. From this baseline knowledge and experience, the course offered unique opportunities to promote learning.

### **Dismantling Perceptions and Bridging Connections: Teacher Candidates' Experiences with Members of the Global Community**

A key pedagogical feature of *Issues in Global Education* involved TCs four cross-cultural experiential learning opportunities. While the aims and outcomes of the cross-cultural experiences were unique, two dominant themes helped illuminate what TCs deemed were significant during the experiential components and contributed to learning: 1) experiencing cognitive dissonance and 2) forging human connections.

**Experiencing cognitive dissonance.** The theory of cognitive dissonance posits that people experience discomfort when they recognize a discrepancy or inconsistency between one's own beliefs and their attitudes and behavior (Festinger, 1957). During self reflection activities associated with different experiential components of class, TCs used phrases like “eye opening,” “shocked,” “uncomfortable,” and “challenged to think differently” to describe their experiences. Most described experiences with cognitive dissonance that challenged TCs to reflect on their own privileges and to consider the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of others. Reflecting on their personal and professional responsibilities as future educators TCs began to consider difficulties refugees and immigrants might experience culturally and linguistically in schools. One activity, Community Language Learning (Stevick 1976, 1980), was mentioned most prominently in TC's reflections as an example of their experience with cognitive dissonance. As one student reflected:

This taught me how hard it must be for people to come into a completely different culture where they don't speak the native language and have no idea what people are saying. This really put us into that situation I know I was uncomfortable and I wouldn't want others to struggle with that either.

TCs offered sentiments like the one above and others, which combined putting one's self in another's shoes and described feelings or a sense of discomfort as significant experiences for learning.

**Forging human connections.** The cross-cultural experiential learning opportunities also enabled TCs to learn about critical human rights issues and to interact with people from around the world. For all cross-cultural experiential learning activities, TCs engaged in purposefully structured learning opportunities to discuss ideas, experiences, attitudes, personal stories, and global issues with international students (Merryfield, 2000). These activities afforded the majority of TCs to "talk with someone from another country for the first time," "learn from the perspective of others," and "help challenge assumptions and misconceptions." Infusing personal stories through primary sources during critical inquiry activities and hearing firsthand experiences during discussions with international students were powerful learning opportunities for TCs. As one student wrote:

Personal stories were impactful when learning about the different issues. Personable activities and content always facilitate the most drastic change in perspective for me. I think I can speak for most people when I say the personal stories, especially meeting real people, are the most powerful way to change perceptions of refugees and immigrants.

The positive interactions and meaningful dialogue with international students allowed TCs to develop interpersonal relationships, practice cross-cultural communication, and share different viewpoints. These educational opportunities fostered changes in global knowledge and the development of global perspectives required of global educators. Experiences that involved cognitive dissonance (Coryell et al., 2010; Dwyer, 2004; Kissock & Richardson, 2010; Merryfield, 2001) and forged human connections (Merryfield, 2000) were significant and led to changes in TCs perceptions of refugees and immigrants.

## **Transformed Perceptions: Teacher Candidates' Affinity with Members of the Global Community**

Through the cross-cultural experiential learning opportunities and course content, TCs demonstrated changes in global knowledge and global dispositions and in perceptions of refugees and immigrants. Prominent themes are discussed below.

**Challenged misunderstanding and stereotypes.** Engaging TC's in critical inquiry and cross-cultural experiential learning is one way to battle rampant nativism, xenophobia, and racism that plague discourses associated with global migration crises. TCs lack of prior knowledge about global issues or firsthand experiences with people from around the world left room for misinformation and uninformed stereotypes to take hold (Crocco, 2010; Merryfield & Wilson, 2005; Ukpokodu, 2010). As demonstrated through ongoing critical reflection, TCs began to view their "previous conceptions of refugees and immigrants as inaccurate and uneducated." Their reflections revealed a transformation in perception as they saw "refugees as humans," no longer "equate refugees with terrorists," and "stopped referring to immigrants as illegals." As one student mentioned,

I've become more sensitive and accepting of immigrants and refugees and look at their situations more critically and personally. I no longer view them as just a number or as terrorists, but real people trying to make a better life for themselves and their families.

While these statements demonstrate powerful change, the simplest and most profound statement simply acknowledged, "Immigrants and refugees alike are people just like you and me."

**Empathy.** Early in the course, TCs described being "unsure how I feel," or as having an "uneasiness" when asked to describe their perceptions of immigrants and, refugees. As TCs participated in course activities, interacted with international students, and reflected on their experiences, some students expressed "regret for previous thoughts" as feelings of empathy developed. For many TCs, empathy development was connected with critical inquiry projects and class discussions, which explored human rights issues (i.e. "The lack of rights for women or the different views on education just amazes me. I can honestly say that over the course of this class I have developed more understanding and greater empathy for individuals whose rights are compromised."). Still others

described, “empathy evolving from the study of oppression” and through talking with someone who had firsthand experience with oppression. As one TC offered, “Meeting a real person that I could talk to from a place like Eritrea really amplified my empathy for the citizens of that country and those fleeing persecution.” The critical country studies and cross-cultural experiential learning provided TCs with opportunities deconstruct us/them binaries and parochial legacies from K-12 curriculum to develop empathy (Gaudelli, 2010; Mangram & Watson, 2011).

**Respect and solidarity.** As TC’s reflected on their various experiences they expressed becoming more aware of social and cultural diversity found on campus and in the world. Through discussions with international students, TCs began to see culture as viewed through different vantage points and “came to appreciate the cultural perspectives of different individuals.” Through cross-cultural communication TCs learned “the importance of finding out others individual stories and experiences” and to “not paint everyone from a region, country, or culture with one brush.” It was also clear that TCs began to “perceive immigrants and refugees more equally with the rest of society.” TCs indicated their perspectives changed during discussions with international students:

I specifically saw my perspective change when [student] talked about how his brother was taken from his home and taken to jail just for expressing his opinion against the government. This is so different from the life that I know. Being able to have a conversation with [student] and each of the international students opened me up to how we can all come from different places and have unique experiences but we are all connected by our humanity.

As a result of the various cross-cultural experiential learning opportunities, TCs expressed a newfound sense of efficacy in cross-cultural communication, (i.e., “feeling more comfortable and confident communicating with people from different cultures”) and commitment to local/global engagement (i.e., “desire to advocate for immigrants and refugees). Through cross-cultural experiential learning, TCs began to embody an ethos that is critical for learning about and with others (Andreotti, 2006); that all people have rights and responsibilities toward others (Myers & Zaman, 2009; Pike, 2008) to act upon issues of injustice (Andreotti, 2006; Rizvi, 2009).

### **The Uncritical Privileged: A Challenge in the Development of Globally Competent Teachers:**

The findings presented thus far indicate TCs experiences in the course were overwhelmingly positive and resulted in significant changes in TCs' perceptions, global learning, and the development of global perspectives. However, these changes were not present among all TCs. While limited, three consistently wrote reflections that uncritically acknowledged others' circumstances or experiences with oppression in comparison with their own lives. They appeared unable to deconstruct us/them binaries and develop empathy (Gaudelli, 2010; Mangram & Watson, 2011). For example, one TC reflected:

I used to think that my life was unfair, but after learning about children who are forced to run away and leave their parents because of the amount of violence in their hometown, I haven't experienced unfair. I have it a lot easier than I think and now after taking this class, I appreciate my life more. I almost feel guilty for not being aware of what is going on in the world.

In this quote, the TC equated "unfair" personal experiences with structural forms of oppression (i.e. violence) that were explicitly and critically examined in the course. The language incorporated in their final sentence, "I almost feel guilty for not being aware," demonstrates that despite course experiences, some TCs were unable to move beyond parochial perceptions of people and their circumstances nor willing to engage further to learn more or take action.

This disconnect was also demonstrated by other TCs; language in reflections reified their own privilege rather than examining and critiquing underlying structures that create and sustain inequality. Reflections on immigrant and refugees' experiences from two other TCs also capture the essence of the theme: uncritical privilege. In the first example, the TC expresses a sense of pleasure from talking with international students, but remains uncritical of their own privilege. The TC shared, "I really enjoy hearing about their journey not because I enjoy hearing about how hard it was but because it reminds me how good we have it here in the United States." A second example from a TC indicates a sense of pleasure from a discussion activity, but reflects inward to reify their privileged state of being. "I like to hear about how brave and all the amazing sacrifices they were forced to make to be able to have a life like a U.S. citizen. It helps me realize that I shouldn't take

time spent with my family, or going to school and having a well paying job for granted.” Taken together, these examples suggest the need to identify student perceptions throughout the course and better scaffold critical self-reflection to probe individual thinking more deeply.

## **Discussion**

As stated earlier, there is no prescriptive path to develop global knowledge and global competencies through teacher training, but as global educators our collective effort and ongoing experimentation provide new insights. With more than 28% of the K-12 student population in the United States now children of immigrants (Passel & Cohn, 2009) it seemed appropriate to explore global issues related to human migration as a way to develop global knowledge and competencies in TCs. This research contributes to a growing body of literature for developing globally competent teachers.

First, teacher candidates need more authentic opportunities to develop global competencies. At this particular university, students entered teacher preparation programs with very little global knowledge and few global experiences. Some of this is due to ideological struggles over the curriculum in social studies, pressures for high-stakes testing, and what knowledge is privileged. The absence of a K-12 global education curriculum leaves TCs vulnerable to lack of global awareness, misinformation, uncritical perspectives, and stereotyping. But, this knowledge also empowered my work as a global educator to experiment with political pedagogies like GCE to emphasize cross-cultural experiential learning, critical inquiry and take actions to develop globally competent teachers.

Second, the types of experiences offered to TCs matters greatly. In this study TCs participated in several cross-cultural experiential learning opportunities. Merryfield (2000, p. 429) explored the impact of “lived experiences” on teachers and teacher educators engaging in “significant experiences with people different from themselves” (p. 440). When these experiences are combined with critical reflection on the dynamic interplay of identity, culture, and power, people begin to examine issues and events from others perspectives. Thus, perspective consciousness – one of the defining characteristics of a globally competent educator – developed. During the course TCs engaged in knowledge transformation activities and cross-cultural dialogue with people from other countries and cultures for the first time. Cross-cultural dialogue helped TCs synthesize the aims of the

course: “Talking with the international students made everything we learned in this class come together.” Dialogue also created opportunities for TCs to experience cognitive dissonance, forge human connections, and develop awareness of their perspectives and appreciation for others’ viewpoints. Global educators have long-held the belief that placing students into situations of otherness will create dissonance and lead them to an awareness of their perspective and an appreciation of myriad other viewpoints (Coryell et al., 2010; Dwyer, 2004; Kissock & Richardson, 2010; Merryfield, 2001).

Third, while study abroad, international student teaching, and other types of immersions experiences are the gold standard, TCs can still develop global perspectives (Hanvey, 1976), global competencies (Longview, 2008), and cognitive, affective, and participatory dimensions of GCE (UNESCO, 2014; Wintersteiner et. al, 2015) through local cross-cultural experiential learning. The course demonstrated the power of collaboration to create a local international experience for TCs and involved various programs and departments on campus (i.e., Global Studies, African Studies, Center for International Studies, Counseling and Higher Education, Linguistics, and Global Health). The findings from this study should encourage teacher educators to collaborate with colleagues and members of their local communities to design opportunities for cross-cultural experiential learning.

Fourth, the study also highlights there is no panacea when uncritical privilege exists. Several questions emerged from the enactment of the *Issues* course that merit reflection and consideration as we move forward. How should global educators challenge students that are resistant to change, whose perceptions still dehumanize or marginalized groups, perpetuate stereotypes, or continue believing an “us-them” dualism? What can teacher educators do for TCs who possess uncritical privilege and view others as charity and pity rather than with solidarity and humanity? To get to these issues and perhaps dig more deeply into others will require additional research with different instruments for investigation. Therefore, I encourage future researcher into diverse dimensions of civic and global knowledge, identity, efficacy, and engagement.

In closing, a TC shared, “I never thought about the fact that I could potentially have an international, immigrant, or refugee student in my classroom and how that would affect my teaching and their learning.” The naivety of this statement surprised me more than any

other and encouraged me to think about opportunities for TCs that extend beyond the classroom. As global educators, we must design opportunities for students to develop critical global approaches and perspectives by working more closely with communities of global cultures. Opportunities to engage TCs in meaningful service learning or volunteering in communities other than their own merits further consideration (Rodriguez, 2011). Future research also needs to extend beyond our own classrooms for teacher training. We need to investigate the extent to which cross-cultural experiential learning opportunities translate into action in K-12 classrooms (i.e., curriculum, pedagogy) and in communities (i.e., co-curricular, extra-curricular, service learning advocacy, international immersion, etc.) as TCs continue to develop global competencies through personal and professional experiences.

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## Appendix A – Reflection Questions

### 1) Initial Reflections on Global Knowledge and Experience

1. What were your social studies classes like in high school?
2. How were you taught about countries outside the United States?
3. How were you taught about immigration?
4. How were you taught about refugees?

### 2) Immigration Critical Country Study

#### About Immigration

- a. How much did you know about immigration before the class activities and project?
- b. After completing the project and activities, what are your perspectives on immigration?
- c. Based on the reading and discussions in class, which approach to immigration policy do you agree with most? Why?
- d. As you reflect on your experience, what more do you want to know about immigration?

#### About the Project

- e. What was satisfying about the project? What did you find frustrating about the project?
- f. If you were advising the professor, what is something about the critical country study that can be improved?
- g. As you look ahead to the critical country study on refugees, what is something you would like to improve for next time?

### 3) Immigration Critical Country Study

#### About Refugees

- a. How much did you know about refugees before the class activities and project?
- b. After completing the project and activities, what are your perspectives on refugees?
- c. Based on the reading and discussions in class, which approach to refugee policy do you agree with most? Why?
- d. As you reflect on your experience, what more do you want to know about refugees?
- e. What did you find similar about your immigration and refugee projects?  
What did you find different?

**Written Policy Response: What should be the United States policy for resettling refugees? Your response needs to take into account the following:**

- a. How do you strike a balance among humanitarian, economic, and security reasons?
- b. How should U.S. taxpayers pay? Where should benefits go? Are there limits to benefits?
- c. Should the U.S. establish criteria for ‘Who should be allowed to resettle and who should not?’ Please explain.
- d. Make a recommendation for where and how the U.S. should respond to refugee crises.

### **About the Project**

- f. What was satisfying about the project? What did you find frustrating about the project?
- g. If you were advising the professor, what is something about the critical country study that can be improved?

#### 4) Cross-cultural Experiential Learning Workshops

##### **Cross Cultural Communication**

1. What did you know about effective communication before the workshop?
2. What did you learn from participation in the workshop? *Please provide evidence of skills, knowledge, and attitude/disposition that developed during the workshop.*
3. How were you able to practice or use the skills you learned from the cross-cultural communication workshop during the conversations outside of class or with international students?
4. As you think about your professional future, how will the skills you developed or knowledge you gained from the workshop help you in the long term?
5. What would you keep from the workshop for use with future classes? How might this workshop be improved for use with future classes?

##### **Cross Cultural Dialogue**

1. What did you know about the lives and experiences of international students before the workshop?
2. What did you learn from participation in the workshop? *Please provide evidence of skills, knowledge, and attitude/disposition that developed during the workshop.*
3. What skills or knowledge from class were you able to practice or use during the conversations with international students?
4. As you think about your professional future, how will the skills you developed or knowledge you gained from the workshop help you in the long term??
5. What would you keep from the workshop for use with future classes? How might this workshop be improved for use with future classes?

##### **Best Practices for Working with English Language Learners**

1. What did you know about working with ELL students before the workshop?

2. What did you learn from participation in the workshop? *Please provide evidence of skills, knowledge, and attitude/disposition that developed during the workshop.*
3. What skills or knowledge from class do you think will be most beneficial in the near term?
4. As you think about your professional future, how will the skills you developed or knowledge you gained from the workshop help you in the long term?
5. What would you keep from the workshop for use with future classes? How might this workshop be improved for use with future classes?

## **5) Summative Questions**

1. Think about the workshops we had in class as they relate to work with immigrants or refugees. What recommendations would make to someone in your professional field (i.e., teaching, engineering, law, journalism, child and family studies) when working with immigrants or refugees? Answers should address key learning from the following workshops:
  - a. Cross-Cultural Communication
  - b. Cross-Cultural Mentoring
  - c. Best Practices for Working with English Language Learners
2. One of the overarching outcomes of this course and the activities chosen is for students to develop or enhance their global perspectives. Please consider your experiences in this class to answer the following questions:
  - a. In what ways did your awareness of and appreciation for different perspectives of the world change?
  - b. To what extent did you develop an understanding of global issues and events and their cause-and-effect relationships.
  - c. To what extent did you develop awareness of diversity of ideas and practices in human societies around the world? To what extent did you develop empathy and your own thinking about ideas covered in class?

d. To what extent did you learn about aspects of the world, global change, and interconnectedness?

e. To what extent did you develop awareness of the problems of choice confronting individuals, nations, and humans?

3. As a result of the course content and activities, to what extent did your perceptions of immigrants, refugees, and ELL students change? Please support your answer with specific examples of course content or activities that facilitated perception change.

4. What is next for you on your journey to further develop global competence and global awareness? To what extent has this course encouraged you to exhibit an ongoing willingness to actively seek out and participate in intercultural opportunities? Please provide examples of opportunities you are seeking and a rationale for your participation or reasons you are not seeking opportunities and why.

#### **Appendix B – Timeline of Data Sources, Collection, and Analysis**

Data Sources – Reflective Journals	Date Collected	Analysis
1) Initial reflections on global knowledge and experience	January 20, 2016	May through July, 2016
2) Immigration critical country study	February 3, 2016	
3) Refugee critical country study	February 24, 2016	
4) Cross-cultural experiential learning workshops	April 6, 2016	
5) Summative reflection on the course	April 20, 2016	

**Appendix C – Selected Examples of Themes and Subthemes**

Codes	Theme	Definition	Quote
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knew little</li> <li>• Did not understand</li> <li>• Was not aware</li> <li>• Surprised by US involvement</li> <li>• Issues more complex than realized</li> </ul>	Fragmented Facts and Parochial Perceptions: The Disconnect of American Students and the Global Community	TCs possessed very little knowledge about immigrant or refugees' experiences, the magnitude of conditions that force the displacement of people	"I didn't know much about before this class. I couldn't tell you the difference between refugees and the process of immigration."

Codes	Subtheme	Definition	Quote
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See refugees differently</li> <li>• See immigrants differently</li> <li>• Hearing stories elicited feelings</li> <li>• Meeting people elicited feelings</li> <li>• Put self in others shoes</li> </ul>	Empathy	TCs mention growing awareness and learning about issues, practices, and ideas around the world and the development of empathy through learning.	"Studying the different social norms has created, evolved, and grown my empathy for those oppressed."